

Translation of an Arabic Pamphlet on the History and Doctrines of the Wahhábís, written by 'Abdullah, grandson of 'Abdul Wahháb, the founder of Wahhábism.—By J. O'KINEALY, C. S., Calcutta.

This pamphlet* contains a complete description of the taking of Makkah, and shews that the Wahhábís looked on it in the same light as the Crusaders did the taking of Jerusalem. They entered the holy city not as warriors, but as pilgrims. It is interesting from a historical point of view, as it is a means by which we can test the conflicting statements of Burekhardt and Corancez; but what is of far greater interest is, that it proves, beyond all possibility of doubt, the identity on all important points of Wahhábí doctrines in Arabia with Wahhábí doctrines in India, and confirms the prevalent view that one is the offshoot of the other. Many parts corroborate the statements of Palgrave as to the intolerance of the sect, and there will be found towards the end a list of mortal sins, which are almost the same as those given in his book.

'Abdullah with several other Wahhábís of Najd was put to death in 1818 by Ibráhím Páshá, when the latter took Daráyah. His grandson 'Abdur-Rahmán, and his great-grandson 'Abdul Laţíf were both alive when Palgrave visited that city in 1862.

TRANSLATION.

In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful!

Praise be to God, the Lord of the Universe, and blessing and peace be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful, and on his people and his companions, and those who lived after them, and their successors of the next generation! Now I was engaged in the holy war, carried on by those who truly believe in the Unity of God, when God, praised be He, graciously permitted us to enter Makkah, the holy, the exalted, at midday, on the 6th day of the week on the 8th of the month (Muharram), 1218, Hijrî. Before this, Sa'úd, our leader in the holy war, whom the Lord protect, had summoned the nobles, the divines, and the common people of Makkah; for indeed the leaders of the pilgrims and the rulers of Makkah had resolved on battle, and had risen up against us in the holy place (haram), to exclude us from the house of God. But when the army of the true believers advanced, the Lord filled their hearts with terror, and they fled hither and thither. Then our commander gave protection to every one within the holy place, while we, with shaven heads and hair cut short, entered with safety, crying

* The original is preserved among the Government Dihlí MSS. (Arabic MSS., No. 861).

“Labbaika,” without fear of any created being, and only of the Lord God. Now, though we were more numerous, better armed and disciplined than the people of Makkah, yet we did not cut down their trees, neither did we hunt, nor shed any blood except the blood of victims, and of those four-footed beasts which the Lord has made lawful by his commands.

When our pilgrimage was over, we gathered the people together on the forenoon of the first day of the week, and our leader, whom the Lord save, explained to the divines what we required of the people, and for which we would slay them, *viz.*, a pure belief in the Unity of God Almighty. He pointed out to them that there was no dispute between us and them except on two points, and that one of these was a sincere belief in the unity of God, and a knowledge of the different kinds of prayer of which *du'á* was one. He added that to shew the significance of ‘shirk,’ the prophet (may he be blessed!) had put people to death on account of it; that he had continued to call upon them to believe in the Unity of God for some time after he became inspired, and that he had abandoned shirk before the Lord had declared to him the remaining four pillars of Islám. The second point related to actions lawful and unlawful as prohibited. He said that as regards these they retained but the name, while the use, nay any vestige of them, had altogether disappeared.

Then they jointly and severally admitted that our belief was best, and promised the Amír to be guided by the Qorán and the Sunnat. He accepted their promise and pardoned them. Neither did he give any of them the least annoyance, nor cease to treat them with the greatest friendship, especially the divines. And he spoke to them of our faith, publicly and privately giving them proofs of what he believed. We, too, asked them to discourse and confer with us and to speak the truth without reservation. Moreover, we explained to them what the Amír had spoken to them publicly, and pointed out the proofs of it in the Qorán and the Sunnat, and in the conduct of our spotless ancestors, such as the orthodox Caliphs who ruled over their followers. For the prophet had said, “upon you be my Sunnat, and the Sunnat of the orthodox Caliphs after me.” We also gave them proofs from the four Imáms, Doctors of Divinity, and those who were instructed by them up to the third generation after the prophet, according to his saying: “Well, for you is my generation, next that which follows, and after it the succeeding generation.” Again we pointed out to them that we were searchers after truth wheresoever it might be, and obeyed those proofs which were clear and open without caring whether they were opposed to what our ancestors had or had not done. In fine, they were not able to chide us for a single thing, while we showed them their errors in asking help in their necessities from the dead; and as they had still some a few doubts about it, we removed them by relevant proofs from the Qorán and the Sunnat. They

then acknowledged our belief, and there was not one amongst them who doubted or hesitated to believe that that for which we condemned men to death, was the truth pure and unsullied. And they swore a binding oath, although we had not asked them, that their hearts had been opened and their doubts removed, and that they were convinced whoever said, 'Oh prophet of God!' or 'Oh Ibn 'Abbás!' or 'Oh 'Abdul Qádir!' or called on any other created being, thus entreating him to turn away evil or grant what is good, (where the power belongs to God alone,) such as recovery from sickness, or victory over enemies, or protection from temptation, &c. ; he is a 'Mushrik,' guilty of the most heinous form of shirk, his blood shall be shed and property confiscated. Nor is it any excuse that he believes the effective first cause in the movements of the universe is God, and only supplicates those mortals, who are between death and resurrection, to intercede for him or bring him nearer the presence of God, so that he may obtain what he requires from Him through them or through their intercession. Again, the tombs which had been erected over the remains of the pious, had become in these times as it were idols whither the people went to pray for what they required, they humbled themselves before them, and called upon those lying in them, in their distress, just as did those who were in darkness before the coming of Muhammad.

Among those present were Muftí Shaikh 'Abdulmalik ul-Qala'í, a Hanafite, Husain ul-Maghribí, a Málikí Muftí, and 'Uqail bin Yahyá al-'Alawí.

When this was over, we razed all the large tombs in the city which the people generally worshipped and believed in, and by which they hoped to obtain benefits or ward off evil, so that there did not remain an idol to be adored in that pure city, for which God be praised. Then the taxes and customs we abolished, all the different kinds of instruments for using tobacco we destroyed, and tobacco itself we proclaimed forbidden. Next we burned the dwellings of those selling *hashísh*, and living in open wickedness, and issued a proclamation, directing the people to constantly exercise themselves in prayer. They were not to pray in separate groups according to the different Imáms; but all were directed to arrange themselves at each time of prayer behind any Imám who is a (muqallid) follower of any of the four Imáms (may the Lord be pleased with them!). For in this way the Lord would be worshipped by as it were one voice, the faithful of all sects would become friendly disposed towards each other, and all dissensions would cease.

We appointed a ruler over them, 'Abd ul-Mu'ín, the Sharíf, and his rule was established without shedding of blood, and without dishonoring or annoying any person. Praised be the Lord of the Universe!

Afterwards, we gave them a pamphlet, composed by Shaikh Muhammad

on the Unity of God, which contains all the arguments supported by their sentences bearing on it, in the Qorán and the Hadís which are *muwátir*, so that the souls might be comforted. And we compiled from extracts of it a smaller pamphlet fit for the common people which we commanded be distributed in their places of meeting, read in their assemblies and explained to them by the divines, so that by learning the doctrine of the Unity of God, and seizing it with a firm grasp, they might awake to the knowledge of shirk, and become careful. The pamphlet is as follows :

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate !

Know that God has been kind to you, inasmuch as you are the best of the race of Abraham, and worship God in a pure manner. The Lord commanded all mankind to do so, and it was for this purpose He created them, as He said, "I only created the Jins and mankind to worship." Then know that God created you to worship Him, and know that there cannot be worship without belief in the Unity of God, just as He will not listen to a prayer unless offered up after purification. When shirk enters into any form of worship, it vitiates it, as is related in the Hadís. Also He has said, "Mushriks are not in a position to worship the Lord, since they testify against themselves that they are infidels. Their acts shall not avail them, and they shall burn for all eternity." Therefore, whoever calls upon other than God entreating him to grant something which is only within His power, such as obtaining a benefit or avoiding a misfortune, he, indeed, is guilty of *shirk* in his worship, as the Lord has said, "Those who go astray and call upon others beside the Lord, shall not be answered, even until the day of judgment; and those on whom they call, shall not heed them; and when mankind shall rise again from the dead, they will look upon their supplicators as their enemies, and their worship as infidelity." Again, the Lord has said, "Those whom you supplicate other than Me, can avail you nothing. When you supplicate them, they will not hear your supplication, and even should they hear you, they will not answer, and instead of speaking in your favour, they will adjudge you infidels on the day of judgment." In short, the Lord exalted and blessed has declared that entreating others than Him is shirk; therefore, whoever says, "Oh prophet of God," or "Oh Ibn 'Abbás," or "Oh 'Abdul Qádir," or "Oh beloved," &c., thinking that the person supplicated is a way unto the Lord, or an interceder with Him, or a means to Him, he is a Mushrik: his blood shall be shed, and his property confiscated unless he repent. And in the same way, whoever kills an animal in the name of other than God, or makes a vow to him or puts trust in him, hopes to be benefited, or fears to be injured by him, or asks him for assistance in those things which belong to God alone, he is a Mushrik, of whom the Lord has said, those who are guilty of shirk

towards Him, shall not be pardoned; but except these the Lord will pardon whomsoever He wishes! These also are as it were the Mushriks of Arabia, against whom the prophet (may he, &c.!) stood up in battle and commanded to worship with a pure heart. This is evident for four reasons given by God in the Qorán:

1st. It is known that the infidels against whom the prophet (may he &c.!) made war, had admitted that the Lord was the Supporter, the Creator, the Giver of life and death, the Ruler over all things. The proofs of this are the words of the Lord: "Say, who gives you food from the heavens and the earth? who is the Master of hearing and seeing? who calls forth life from death, and death from life? who rules events?" They will quickly say, 'God'. Then answer, "but you do not fear him."

And the Lord has said, "Say, if you know, whose is the earth and what is in it?" They will answer, 'it belongs to God;' then say, "is it not that you do not remember Him?" Again, "say, who is the Lord of the seven heavens, and Lord of the great 'Arsh?" They will answer, 'God.' Then say, "is it not that you do not fear Him?" Say, "if you know, who is he in whose hands is dominion over everything? who can compel, yet not be compelled?" They will quickly answer, 'God.' Then answer, "is it not that you do not fear Him?" After you have known this, and found it difficult to understand, how people who accept the scriptures, can supplicate others than God, turn to the second reason which is as follows:

They say, "we only turn towards and supplicate those departed, that they may intercede with God for us. We ask not from them, but from God, through their intercession." The proofs against this opinion are the words of God, "They worship other than God, that can neither harm nor profit them, and say, "these have interceded for us with the Lord." Answer, "can you inform God of anything either in the heavens or the earth of which He has not knowledge. He is more holy and high than those whom you give Him as companions."

Those who have adopted not God, but others as a patron say, "we only worship them, that they may propitiate us with the Lord; for of a certainty He will decide favourably in matters with which they are concerned." They also hold as opposed to us that God will not point out the way of salvation to infidels or liars." Having understood this, turn towards the third reason, *viz.*, that he who calls on an idol to intercede for him, and he who though abandoning idols yet depends on holy persons, such as Christ, or His mother, or the angels, is in the same position. The proof of this is in the words of the Lord, "Those who seek a means to God, are they nearer Him? They hope for His mercy and fear His punishment, and certainly the punishment of your Lord is severe." And the prophet (may he be &c.!) has said, "There is no difference between those who

worship idols, and those who worship holy persons. They are both infidels." Moreover, we fought with them, until they all turned towards God.

The fourth reason is : The people the prophet speaks of, when in distress, took refuge with God and, forgetting their past conduct, abandoned shirk ; while the people of our times, when in difficulties, seek refuge in supplicating their Pírs. The Lord has said, " when they mount their ships, they supplicate God, taking refuge with Him besides God." Now, if you understood this, you will perceive that the Mushriks in the time of the prophet (may he be &c.!) were not guilty of such heinous shirk as the wiser Mushriks of our times. The former sought refuge with God in their distress ; the latter call upon their Pírs. The Lord is omniscient.

And among the persons who presented themselves before us with the people of Makkah and witnessed our victory in discussion, was Husain ul-Airat'í ul-Hazramí, afterwards al-Hayání. He continued to visit us and sit with Sa'úd and others of the force who were well learned in the scriptures, and he asked us of those matters other than the intercession of Saints, for which our swords were unsheathed. This he did fearlessly, and without any dread, as he was guiltless of any thing wrong in our eyes. So we informed him of our belief which is as follows : We believe, our sect holds the real true religion, is the sect of the Ahl-us-Sunnat and al-Jamá'at, and that our way to salvation is that of the pious ancient departed, most easy and excellent, and opposed to the doctrines of those who hold that the modern way is the best. We construe the Qorán and Hadíses according to the meaning apparent on the face of them, and leave the interpretation of them to God, for He is the Ruler. And for this reason that the divines who have passed away, so acted in answering the question as to whether the highest heaven is level or not, which arose out of the words of the merciful God, " The 'Arsh is level ;" they held that " level" was well known, and as it was predicated of 'Arsh, it was lawful to believe in it, and heretical to question it. We believe that good and evil proceed from God, the exalted ; that nothing happens in His kingdom, but what He commands ; that created beings do not possess free will, and are not accountable for their own acts ; but on the contrary they obtain rank and spiritual reward, merely as an act of grace, and suffer punishment justly, for God is not bound to do anything for His slaves. We believe that the faithful will see Him in the end, but we do not know under what form, as it was beyond our comprehension. And in the same way we follow Imám Ahmad Ibn Hanbal in matters of detail ; but we do not reject any one who follows any of the four Imáms, as we do the Shí'ahs, the Zaidiyyahs, and the Imámiyyahs, &c., who belong to no regular churches. Nor do we admit them in any way to

act openly according to their vicious creeds ; on the contrary, we compelled them to follow one of the four Imáms. We do not claim to exercise our reason in all matters of religion, and none of our faith demand such a position, save that we follow our judgment where a point is clearly demonstrated to us in either the Qorán or the Sunnat still in force, and though there has been no special command in favour of it, yet there is nothing of weight against it. As a rule, we hold the same as the four Imáms ; but we reject all sects in connection with property inherited by our ancestors, and hold them preferred, although it is opposed to the Hanbalí sect. We do not enquire to what sect a person belongs, neither do we abandon the forms prescribed by the four sects, except where we find a clear decision contrary to any of them and the matter is merely an outward observance, such as the action of an Imám at prayers. Hence we direct Malakís and Hanafís equally to collect themselves an instant, when standing or sitting before prostrating themselves at prayers, for on this point the evidence is clear. On the other hand, we do not prohibit the saying of " Bismillah " in a loud voice, as is the custom among Sháfi'ís, neither do we direct it to be said inwardly. Where two contrary practices were in force, and the evidence in connection with each is strong, we declare both allowable, even though this is contrary to any sect. But this occurs only very rarely. The exercise of our reason in some matters of religion is not prohibited, nor can such be deemed contradictory to repudiating the right to exercise our reason in all religious matters ; for above all the four Imáms followed their own will in some minor religious observances, even so far as to act contrary to the rules of the sect which they founded.

We make use of the usual orthodox commentaries in striving to understand the Qorán, such as the Tafsír Jarír and its compendium by Ibn Kaşír the Sháfi'í, and so also the Baghawí, Baizáwí, Kházin, Haddád, Jalálain, and other commentaries. We also use the commentaries of the well known Imáms to explain the Hadíşes, *viz.*, 'Asqalání, Qustulání on Bukhárí, the Nabawí on Muslim, Manáwí on Jámi'uççaghír, and Mukhawwaç on collections of Hadíşes, as the Umahát us-sittah, or 'the six mothers,' their commentaries, the different books of all sects in all sciences, all ordinances, histories, grammar, and all sciences, helpmates to other sciences. We do not command the destruction of any writings except such as tend to cast people into infidelity to injure their faith, such as those on Logic, which have been prohibited by all Divines. But we are not very exacting with regard to books or documents of this nature, save if they appear to assist our opponents, we destroy them. As to the destruction of certain books belonging to the people of Táfif by the Badawís, that proceeded from their ignorance, they were punished for it and so were others for the same thing. We do not consider it proper to make Arabs prisoners of war, nor have

we done so, neither do we fight with other nations. Finally, we do not consider it lawful to kill women or children.

As to those liars and concealers of the truth who say, that we explain the Qorán according to our own views and only hold those traditions which agree with our opinions, without having recourse to the well known commentaries on the one or taking into consideration the narrators of the other; that we lower the dignity of our prophet Muhammad (may, &c.) and say that he has rotted in his grave, and that any one of us would derive more advantage from his staff than from him; that he cannot intercede for us; that pilgrimage to his tomb is improper; and that he was so ignorant, as not to know positively "There is no God except God" until he became inspired;—we answer, 'only consider that this sentence "There is no God but God" was given forth in Madínah.' Moreover, they say, we do not attend to the sayings of the learned and destroy the writings of those adhering to any one sect, because though partly true, they are also partly false; that being numerous, we proclaim as infidels not only the people of our time, but all since the beginning of the tenth century (Hijrah), except those who hold as we do; that we do not enrol any person in our sect until he admits that he was a Mushrik, and his father died one; that we prohibit the invocation of our prophet (may, &c.) and pilgrimage to his grave even in cases where it is lawful; that whoever joins us, is considered as free of all incumbrances, *even his debts*; that we do not allow the Ahl-ul-bait (may the Lord be pleased with them!) any superior rights; that we compel them to marry inferiors, and that we force those who are old to put away their young wives, in order to marry them to young men among us, although no suit for a divorce has been instituted before us, nor is it desired by the parties. All this is simple nonsense, and when we are asked about them, we only answer in the words of the Qorán, "Praised be you. These are great calumnies." In short, whoever asserts any such thing of us, lies against us. He who has seen how we order our lives, has visited our meetings, or knows what we hold, can affirm that all these have been made up, and that the disseminators of them are enemies of religion, brothers of the devil, who lure men away from offering up their prayers to God, the exalted, in perfect accord with His Unity, and prevent them from abandoning those different kinds of shirk of which the Lord has declared that He will never forgive, though He will forgive whatever else He wishes. We believe that whoever commits a mortal sin, such as putting a Muslim to death, fornication, taking interest, drinking wines, or whoever repeats such, does not cease to be a Muslim, nor will he suffer eternal punishment, provided he dies entertaining a true belief in the Unity of God.

We believe that our prophet Muhammad (may he, &c.) is more exalted by God than any other created being; that he is alive, lives in his grave

a life quicker than that declared by revelation unto martyrs, and that he can hear the salutations of those who salute him. We consider pilgrimage is supported by legal custom, but it should not be undertaken except to a mosque, and for the purpose of praying in it. Therefore, whoever performs pilgrimage for this purpose, is not wrong, and doubtless those who spend the precious moments of their existence in invoking the Prophet, shall, according to the Hadís, obtain happiness in this world and the next, and he will dispel their sorrows. We do not deny miraculous powers to the saints, but on the contrary allow them. They are under the guidance of the Lord, so long as they continue to follow the way pointed out in the laws and obey the prescribed rules. But whether alive or dead, they must not be made the object of any form of worship. This does not prevent us from asking them or any other Muslim if living to supplicate on our behalf. Thus it is related in the Hadís that Al-mar-ul-Muslim asked that his brother might be accepted by God, and 'Omar directed 'Alí to ask Uwais to supplicate that he might be pardoned, and he did so. According to what has descended to us, our prophet Muhammad (may he, &c.) is empowered to intercede for us on the day of judgment, and so also are all prophets, angels, saints, and children. And we shall ask it of the Lord God, the Ruler over it, the Granter of it to whomsoever He pleases to those who are amongst the best of men, the believers in the Unity of God. Thus one of us entreating the Lord God Almighty shall say, O Lord, you have empowered our prophet Muhammad (may he, &c.) to intercede for us, &c. (in the form handed down by tradition), or we shall ask it of the Lord God, the Granter of it to us on the day of judgment. "O God, you have appointed your pure slave (mortal or angel, as may be) to intercede." Thus we shall ask God for those things which must be demanded from Him and not from them. And as regards the things over which God alone has power, no one will cry out "O prophet of God", or "O Saint of God, I ask your intercession," nor will any one say to this "help me", or "intercede for me", or "assist me." Since calling in this manner on those who are dead, but as yet not risen to judgment, is a form of shirk. There is nothing in its favour, either in the Qorán or the Sunnat. The pious departed have not urged it. On the contrary, they have decided that it is shirk of the most aggravated form, on account of which the prophet warred with the world.

To determine the effect of taking an oath in the name of other than God, it is necessary to look to the intention of the swearer. If he intends by the oath to give that respect which is due to God, or more, as happens among certain violent Mushriks of our time, who swear by their Shaikhs—their gods on whom they rely, such false oaths will not be accepted like those sworn in His name, and the swearers are, according to the general opinion of Muslims, Káfirs, guilty of the most heinous form of shirk, ignorant of

the most simple elements of their religion. When an oath is lightly taken, it is not an aggravated form of shirk; but such a habit must be sternly checked and the swearer directed to beg pardon of God.

As to conjunction with God, we hold that when one says, "O Lord, I shall obtain conjunction with you through the majesty of Muhammad," or "through our prophet," or "through the Majesty of your pure servants," or "through your servant so and so," this is a sort of worship, sinful in its nature, (especially as there has been no decision in favour of it), like the practice of invoking the prophet (may he, &c.) in a loud voice, at *Azán* time.

Now as regards the Ahl-ul-bait, a similar question, *viz.* the lawfulness of marrying a Fátimite, was asked of the people of Daráyah, and they answered in accordance with former decisions regarding them. It is right to be friendly and on good terms with them, as is stated in the Qorán and the Sunnat. But we must remember that *Islám* is the line of separation between us and the rest of mankind; and that there is neither grace nor goodness without piety which carries with it honor, respect, and reverence. All learned people are guided by it in the question of precedence, between persons nearly equal in age or knowledge, or in advancing to meet such when escorting them to the place of honor. But the custom which is prevalent in some cities, of honoring those who are young and ignorant, even so far that they are angry, beat, wound, or at least quarrel with those who do not kiss their hands instead of shaking them, is not based on any decision, nor is there any evidence in its favour. On the contrary, it is forbidden and should be abolished. If one person kisses the hand of another returning from a long journey, or if he does it to honor him for his learning, or after a long absence, it is harmless in itself, but is objectionable, as it becomes known to those who put faith in such things and creates a custom among proud people. Hence we absolutely prohibit it, especially on account of those of whom it is said as a warning: "It is not possible to close all the places where hunters watch." For this very reason we razed the house of the noble Khadíjah, the wife of our Prophet, the dwelling in which the prophet was born, and other places dedicated to certain Saints in Makkah, so that the people might be warned and flee from shirk, inconsistent with His exaltedness, and which He will never forgive. Shirk is worse even than saying God has a son; the latter makes Him superior to all created beings, the former does away with this superiority. For the Lord has said, "A parable is propounded to you about yourselves: "What your right hands have obtained, is it for you or for your companions?"

The marriage of a Fátimite to a person not a Fátimite is not inconsistent with the conduct of Muslims, nor is it wrong. 'Alí and 'Omar-

ibn-ul-Khaṭṭáb so married. These two examples suffice. Sakínah, daughter of Husain-bin-'Alí, married four times, and none of her husbands was a Fáṭimite, or of the tribe of Banú Háshim. Such was the custom of our ancestors, beyond all cavil. We do not compel any person to marry his slave until she demands it, or he is unable to marry his equal. Arabs are all equals for Arabs, and the contrary custom which prevails in many cities, is simply a proof of pride and a desire to exalt one's self, which, as has been foretold, is a certain cause of great evil.

A marriage with an unequal is lawful. Thus Zaid who was a slave married Zainab, the mother of the faithful, a daughter of the Qoraish tribe. This is well known to all sects and is conclusive.

Suppose it is objected by a person not desirous of embracing the truth, that according to our argument, *viz.*, whoever says, "O Prophet of God, I ask you to intercede for me," is a Mushrik, his blood shall be shed, applies to the mass of Muhammadans of modern times, and above all to the Divines who have believed this, and even despoiled those who opposed it. We answer, that it does not follow. The necessary consequence of a sect is not the sect itself, as is well known. So it is not necessary that we must be Mujassimah, though we speak of the "form" of God, but on the contrary we consider whoever dies in that persuasion is lost. We brand as *Káfirs* only those who having heard our call to the true faith, are deaf to it, and who having heard the proofs in its favour, obstinately reject it. These are the predominant sects, these we war with, so long as they remain in wickedness, prohibit lawful acts, or assist others in committing grievous offences. The non-predominant sects we war with only when they assist the former, are pleased with them, or join them, and thus increase their numbers, becoming as it were predominant with them. Warring with them is commanded. We excuse the past generations. They were not protected from error, and their errors are excusable. And as to those who despoiled of their property such persons as did not agree with them, they were mistaken, and making a mistake is no harm. Indeed, better than they have made mistakes, as we know from the tradition of the woman and the decision about dower. History gives other examples. The companions of the prophet erred, when assembled together, with the prophet in their midst. But his glory penetrated them, and they said to a date tree "give us a sign," and it responded. We say, this is the position of those persons who having fallen away from the right way, subsequently awake to their errors; but not of those who are aware of proofs, know the words and practice of the Imáms, and yet remain persistently opposed to them till they die. We say that there is no harm in excusing persons in the first state, nor do we hold them *Káfirs*, simply because they were in error, or even because they continued so. For none of their time opposed their doctrines either by words,

or the sword and spear. They knew of no proofs to the contrary and saw no clearer way. The greater number of the Musalmáns referred to by our opponents, neglected the advice of those who followed the Sunnat. As a rule they had totally forgotten the Sunnat, and even the few who were enlightened turned away from it before it could make any impression on their heart. The nobles persistently prohibited the multitude from hearing it, and the monarchs tortured those in whose heart its faintest trace could be found, except the few whom the Lord protected. Thus Mu'áwiyah and his friends opposed and fought against the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alí-ibn-Abí-Ṭálib. They were wrong and continued so to their deaths. Yet, though they were in error, as we clearly learn from the Ahl-ul-bait, that none of our pious ancestors considered them Káfirs according to Ijmá', or even very wicked; on the contrary they judged them worthy the reward of warriors in the cause of religion. So when we find a man orthodox in matters of faith, pure, pious, clean of heart, and seeking to benefit his sect by devoting his time to learning the useful sciences, or writing about them, we do not call him a Káfir, though he may hold wrong opinions on these or other points. This was the position of Ibn Hajar ul Haiṣamí, yet we consider his writing as well ordered, do not deny his knowledge for a single instant, but on the contrary take great care of some of his books, such as the Sharh ul-Arba'ín, the Alzawájir, &c., believe what he has copied, and though in error in one point, he is one of the Divines of Islám with whom we hold. Any person of experience and wisdom, who is just and free from any leaning towards hard-heartedness or oppression, looks more to what is said than who says it. Again, the customs and habits of people in authority are obligatory. It matters not whether they are just, or unjust, exact imitations of those of whom God has said, "We found our fathers among them following their religion, and we, coming after them, imitate them in their customs and vices," who form a decision of what is right from the individual and not of the individual from his acts. With these last we seek no conversation; but we use the sword until they are truly and sincerely converted.

And, praised be the Lord, the army of the true believers in the Unity of God was victorious, its standards were unfurled under most auspicious circumstances, and "soon shall those in darkness see what turn their affairs shall take." Moreover, we were the more numerous, and God has said "our armies shall be greater in number," and so we were bound to assist the faithful and reward the religious.

As regards Bid'at, our doctrine is that Bid'at is whatever has been introduced after the third generation from Muhammad and is absolutely sinful. This is contrary to the doctrines of those who divide it into good and bad, and those who divide it into five kinds, unless as appears probable they mean to consider as "good" the acts of the pious departed which were optional,

mandúbah, and obligatory, and call it “bid’at,” while “bad” refers to those acts which are unlawful or prohibited. There is no harm in so grouping them.

Among the forms of sinful bid’at which we prohibit, is raising one’s voice at Azán time, on Friday night, during the Ramazán, or at either of the ‘Yds (in Makkah we set aside every thing connected with *tazkír* and *tarkhím* as sinful according to the Divines of every sect), also reading the Hadíses of Abú-Hurairah before the Khatíb on Fridays, which is denounced as Bid’at in the *Jámi’-uççaghír*; assembling on certain particular occasions to read the story of the prophet’s birth and believing that it is a special kind of prayer, even though the members of the assembly have no knowledge of history. There is no precedent for this. Again, we forbid people taking to themselves Pírs, or assembling to invoke their Pírs; calling on their Pírs with a loud voice, offering *fátihahs* to them, or seeking to obtain important advantages through them. For example, we prohibit the *rátib-us-Samán* and the *rátib-ul-haddád* as included in the more heinous form of shirk, for which we are ready to battle.

If any person abandon the right way, follows customs which are not Sunnat but Bid’at, and subsequently refuses to give them up, he is punished by the Magistrate, such punishment as shall seem fit until he repents.

We do not prohibit people from reading frequently pamphlets composed from extracts of the Qorán and Sunnat; and as to blessing the prophet, repeating his name, &c., begging pardon from God, reading the Qorán, &c., all these are commanded by the Law. Whoever exerts himself in such duties will be rewarded, and as his prayers increase, his reward increases in a greater proportion,—provided he offers them up according to law, without changing the words or the form of them. For God has said, “Call on your Lord secretly as a suppliant.” And again, “God has beautiful names, call on him by them.” The *Kitáb-ul-Izkár* is full of praises of God, whoever is a seeker of his God can be so with this book, which is in itself sufficient for religious people.

Among those things which we prohibit is the custom of reciting verses in praise of the prophet, and at the same time blessing him, that of repeating his name or reading it after Taráwih prayers under the belief that it is a form of prayer. Indeed, multitudes are under the idea that this is a custom undoubtedly handed down from our ancestors, and hence we forbid it. But the Taráwih itself is Sunnat, and there is nothing wrong in assembling to read it, or even in repeating it very often. Another form of Bid’at is the custom of reading the five prayers, which are *farz* after the close of Friday in the Ramazán. This has been prohibited by Ijmá’, and we punish it most severely. There are other forms of Bid’at, such as taking the name of God in a loud

voice, when lifting a corpse or when sprinkling the grave with water. No authority for such has descended from the pious departed. In conclusion, it is as well to point out that Shaikh Al-Tartúsí-al-Maghribí has written a book called 'Al-báis fí-inkár-il-bida' wal-hawádiş, and that Abú Shámah al Muqrí has compiled from it a shorter pamphlet, which should be in the hands of all who are earnest in their faith,

We prohibit those forms of Bid'at that affect religion or pious works. Thus drinking coffee, reciting poetry, praising kings, do not affect religion or pious works and are not prohibited, so long as they are not mixed up with acts of the nature above described, neither do we prohibit *I'tikáf* in a mosque in the belief that it is a pious act. Thus Hasan told 'Omar ibn al Khaţţáb, Commander of the Faithful, that he had sung before one who was better than he, and 'Omar allowed him to sing.

All games are lawful. Our prophet (may, &c.) allowed Al-Habshí to play in his mosque on the 'Yd day. So it is lawful to chide and punish persons in various ways; to train them in the use of different weapons; or to use anything which tends to encourage warriors in battle, such as a war-drum. But it must not be accompanied with musical instruments. These are forbidden, and indeed the difference between them and a war drum is clear. However the Daff is allowed at marriages. The prophet (may, &c.) has said, "Impurity has descended to us with purity." And again, "tell the Jews that our faith is not difficult."

We hold that Imám bin Qayam and his Shaikh are true Imáms, followers of the Ahl-us-Sunnat, and we hold their writings in the greatest respect, save that as regards them we are on every point *ghair-muqallid*, and every one of us is allowed to accept or reject their opinions, or the opinions of any person except those of the Prophet. It is well known that we hold opinions opposed to the Imáms on several points. Thus as regards giving three divorces in one assembly, in one sentence, we hold it obligatory following the four Imáms. We hold waqf proper, vows allowable, and their proper performance obligatory. Among the many forms of *bid'at* which we forbid, is offering up Fátihahs to Pírs after the five daily prayers; lauding them immoderately, and seeking conjunction with them after the manner in many cities.

Consolidating prayers, though considered by some as a most pious act, is as a rule a temptation towards shirk, though persons do not perceive it. For shirk is so imperceptible, that people are often unwittingly guilty of it. If not, why should our prophet (may, &c.) have sought protection from it, *viz.*, "O Lord, you have guarded me against knowingly committing shirk. Pardon me, if I have done it unwittingly. To you are known the most secret things." It is absolutely necessary that people should hold to these words, and avoid shirk as much as possible. And 'Omar ibn ul Khaţţáb

said, "The handle of Islám, that best of handles, will be broken." Then they asked "when," and he answered, when some Moslems know not the state of ignorance before the Prophet, &c. For these will do shirk and yet believe that it is a pious act. O God, guard us from backsliding and grant that our faith may not be impaired!

This is a short account of the heads of the conversation which, as already mentioned, we held with Husain ul-Airat'í. He often asked us to put it in writing, and as he was importunate, I have done so, but without referring to our religious books, as I have been busily employed in superintending matters connected with the Holy War. But whoever is desirous of knowing our belief, let him come to us at Daráyah, and he will see what will gladden his heart, and his eyes will be pleased in reading the compilations on the different kinds of knowledge, especially the Tafsírs and Hadíses. He will see God praised in a pleasing manner; the assistance He gives in establishing the true faith; the kindness, which He exerts among the weak and feeble, between inhabitants and travellers.

We do not deny the doctrines of Çúfís, nor the purification of a person's soul from the stains of sin in deed or thought, provided the person who holds them is firm in his religious observances, and treads the straight road as marked out. But we do not undertake to carry it out in all our acts and deeds. Nor do we turn towards, ask assistance, or beg for aid from other than the Lord God, to whom alone we turn in all our acts. He is our Agent, our Master, our Deliverer. May peace and the blessing of God be upon our prince Muhammad and on his family and his companions!

'Abdullah, son of Muhammad, son of 'Abdul-Wahháb, wrote this in Muharram, 1218. [April, 1803, A. D.].

Notes on Sunárgáon, Eastern Bengal.—By DR. J. WISE, Dháká.

[With a plan and a plate.]

Sunárgáon, or, as the Hindús called it, Subarnagrám, was the capital of a Hindú principality anterior to the invasion of Muhammad Bakhtyár Khiljí, A. D. 1203. At the date of the invasion, Lakshman Sen, of the Vaidya caste, was on the throne. He had made Nadiá his capital. Defeated he fled to the residence of his ancestor Ballál Sen in Bikrampúr, and either from there or Sunárgáon he ruled over the eastern districts. The natives of Bikrampúr still point out with pride the square moat of his palace, which is called "Ballál Bári."

The next thing we hear of regarding this part of the country, according to Mr. Taylor,* is that it was governed by Muhammadan Qázís. One

* Topography of Dacca, page 67.